

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

Supplemental
Consent

68

August 5, 2003

FROM: **PETER HILLS**, Fire Chief/Fire Warden
County Fire Department

EMIL MARZULLO, Director
Special Districts Department

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR TREE REMOVAL SERVICES IN THE SAN
BERNARDINO COUNTY MOUNTAINS**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Approve Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to create a master list of qualified contractors to remove trees on properties in the San Bernardino County Mountains and authorize County Fire to release the RFQ.
2. Authorize the Fire Chief to sign County Counsel-approved contracts with the successful vendors to perform tree removal services for the County.
3. Authorize the Director of the Special Districts Department to sign County Counsel-approved contracts with the successful vendors to perform tree removal services for various special districts within the County.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In February 2003, Congressman Jerry Lewis secured approximately \$3.3 million from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)'s Hazard Mitigation Program under Public Law 108-7 for Riverside and San Bernardino counties to utilize toward tree removal programs on properties in the San Bernardino and Angeles National Forests. San Bernardino County will receive \$2,673,101.

On April 8, the County Board of Supervisors authorized a number of County departments to take various actions relative to the use of this Congressional appropriation for the remediation of the unprecedented tree mortality in the San Bernardino Mountain Communities. Among those actions was to approve the concept of blocking parcels for tree removal to obtain the lowest cost services for homeowners while achieving the greatest amount of tree removal.

On June 3, 2003, the County Board of Supervisors authorized the Dead Tree Hazard Abatement Revolving Fund program in the amount of \$1 million. The revolving fund would work in concert with the block tree removal program and the Notice to Abate Hazardous Trees issued by the Hazardous Tree Program through the Office of the Fire Marshal. The current plan is that the fund would be repaid through direct billing of property owners of record for those properties that did not voluntarily comply with removal requirements. Subsequent collection action and/or placing a tax lien on the properties where tree removal action was involuntary may be necessary to recover/replace expended funds in order to continue removal progress mountain-wide. This will be subject to a subsequent report to the Board to discuss and establish a policy that will address this issue.

Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors

Supplemental
Consent

68

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR TREE REMOVAL SERVICES
IN THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY MOUNTAINS****August 5, 2003****Page 2**

Recommendation No. 1 allows County Fire to solicit an RFQ for the purpose of establishing a master list of contractors qualified to provide tree removal services. The RFQ process will allow only selected, highly qualified companies to perform tree removal work for the County. These qualified vendors will have met specified work experience and insurance requirements. Once these vendors are qualified, County Fire can then solicit bids from these vendors to perform services within the block(s) and on non-compliant private property(s) within the San Bernardino County Mountains that require enforcement action by means of tree removal.

Recommendation No. 2 allows the Fire Chief to sign County Counsel-approved contracts (see Attachment D to the RFQ) with the successful vendor to perform tree removal services. Providing authority to the Fire Chief will promote rapid contract execution and thus enable a more rapid response to offering tree removal services. This is especially important when two vendors may be required to clear the trees from one of the identified blocks.

Various special districts own property in the mountain areas of San Bernardino County which require tree removal due to the bark beetle epidemic. Recommendation No. 3 allows the Special Districts Department to sign County Counsel-approved contracts with the successful vendor to perform tree removal services. Providing authority to the Special Districts Department will promote rapid contract execution and enable a more rapid response to offering tree removal services.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: This item was reviewed by County Counsel (Deputy County Counsel Tom Krahelski and Scott Runyan) on July 30, 2003, and the County Administrative Office (Wayne Thies, Administrative Analyst) on July 30, 2003.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Recommendation No. 1: There is no financial impact to soliciting the RFQ. Recommendation No. 2: County Fire estimates that approximately \$1 million in contracts will be issued in FY 2003/04. The funding source for this service contract is the FEMA grant and the Dead Tree Hazard Abatement Revolving Fund. Recommendation No. 3. Special Districts will pay all tree removal expenses from the operating accounts for each district utilizing these services.

COST REDUCTION REVIEW: The County Administrative Office has reviewed this agenda item and concurs with the Departments' proposal and recommends this action based on the following: an extreme health and safety emergency exists in the local mountains due to the existence of more than 99,000 acres of dead, dying, and diseased trees that pose a significant fire threat; that this project is funded by Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) grant, approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 8, 2003 and the Dead Tree Hazard Abatement Revolving Fund approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 3, 2003.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S): First, Second and Third

PRESENTER: Peter Brierty, Fire Marshal, 386-8400